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LADY BULL'S DIVORCE.

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LADY BULL'S DIVORCE.

(Stated by Sir John himself.)

LONDON:
HARRISON AND SONS, 59, PALL MALL.

1886.

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ADDRESSED TO MY FAMILY AND MY FRIENDS.

My divorce from my wife, Lady Bull (*née* Erin Go-Bràgh Fitzpatrick of Paddyland), is now so much the topic of the day, both within the family and amongst our dear good-natured neighbours, that it is only due to myself to make a clean breast of this most painful matter.

The alleged reason for which divorce is sought is, as everybody knows, incompatibility of temper. But this incompatibility of temper is entirely on the side of the lady who demands divorce, and has been for many years intensely embittered by the cold hate of him who now enjoys her private ear, and hopes ere long to occupy my place. I have done her no wrong, and have never refused to do what is clearly right. This is proved by the co-complainant bringing in, as a rational plea for *my* divorce, some alleged misdeeds of my forefathers against the Go-Braghs of other generations. Another count is cruelty,—a degrading charge against a man like me. But my “cruelty” lies in this,—that I always try to keep her worst boys from robbing their brothers, and cutting their throats. Her false “friends” consider this a cruel coercion, unfitting me to be Erin’s husband and protector.

It is said that this Bill of Divorce is intended simply to

permit my wife to manage her own affairs ! What affairs ? Doesn't Erin, at the present moment, manage me and all her other affairs to boot ? And isn't that enough for her, or any other wife ? But this innocent-looking Divorce Bill is drawn so as to hand over my wife to Charnell, and her children and all her affairs to the American-Irish heroes of the bowie-knife and revolver.

My only danger lies in this—some months since, Mr. William Earnest Gabblesome (commonly called “Wily Will,” “the Grand Old Hand,” &c.) cajoled me into appointing him as my chief steward and legal adviser for the very purpose of meeting this dangerous and disgraceful demand for a divorce. Incredible to say, whenever he found himself safely installed as my confidential friend and agent, he wheeled round and headed the assailants of my domestic peace and honour. He now requires my formal consent to this nefarious demand (details to be afterwards arranged), with the threat that, if I dare to withhold it, it will be the worse for me, and I must then look out for my immediate or at least ultimate destruction by dynamite, and other resources of civilization !

I now lay the whole matter before you, the members of my family, as it affects the dearest honour and interests of each one of you as well as mine.

JOHN BULL, BART.,
Of Broadlands, &c., &c.

FULL STATEMENT OF FACTS.

I HAVE the honour to be the present poor representative of an ancient family flourishing in England, dating from far beyond the Conquest, and drawing its blood alike from the noblest Norman and Saxon lines. Our lands—rich, broad, and varied—extend, I may say, through every county in England, and include many valuable estates in the Colonies and other countries. The Bulls have for many centuries bravely kept up the family dignity in the front rank of the landed gentry, and have, at the same time, distinguished themselves from their neighbours by sending out their numerous younger sons into businesses of all sorts. The most restless and adventurous of us have always gone abroad to push their fortunes, and met with the most satisfactory and surprising success. While some of them return to spend their money and the evening of their days in my own neighbourhood, other vigorous members of the race have remained abroad, and set up establishments of their own, rivalling, or, as they rather fondly suppose, excelling the original family seat. As will sometimes happen, even in the best regulated families, there is a good deal of half-brotherly jealousy between us of the old stock and these rising and flourishing younger branches. Some of these, I regret to say, have even gone to law with me, and after much strife, cut the connection

completely, and advertised the fact to all men as a great achievement. I myself am a most peaceful soul, but much of the Bull blood is hot and combative; and I often fear that even my peacefulness is a cause of strife.

Immediately to the north of the Bull estates lies a rough, barren, hilly region, so situated that a ring fence could enclose both, and round them off into a perfect estate, beautifully compact and complete. This hilly district has been held from time immemorial by the ancient clan of the Scotts of Benmoor and Glenburnie, a family well known all over the country, the renowned Sir Walter being perhaps its most famous member. This race of Scotts, poor and yet proud, prudent and yet spirited, go all over the world, and rise wherever they go, but they too are still oftener than the Bulls attracted home to their own rough moors and rocky hills. Indeed, they are in many ways, more like the Bulls than many of the Bulls themselves. Well, neighbours so like each other should have been friends as well as neighbours, but perhaps they were at once too like and too near. I must confess that the Bulls for several generations tried to oust the Scotts from their lands by questioning their titles to them, and claiming the freehold; on more than one occasion taking forcible possession of houses and lands, and carrying off the charter chest and other muniments. The Scotts, however, called up their whole clan of tenants, crofters, shepherds, and gillies, and after much fighting, bore back the Bulls over the boundary marches. There was much strife and bad blood between the families for many years afterwards—indeed, for nearly all the time of the Sir Edwards and Sir

Henrys, and not to speak of the many broken heads and other damages, the law costs and other expenses were enormous.

Later on, the eighth Sir Henry Bull attempted to cut short this tedious contest by abducting the young heiress of the Scotts as a wife for his son, a young man of most amiable character, only too good for this world; while the heiress, Lady Mary, was of such surpassing loveliness that she is remembered to this day as the envy of the one sex, and the delight of the other. It was an excellent match; but Sir Henry's ill-judged and hot-headed attempt to get quit of the formality of marriage settlements by the forcible abduction of the heiress, so irritated the whole name of Scott, that they married off-hand that charming young lady, with all her acres, to the eldest son of Sir Henry's mortal enemy. That was a disaster. The Scott family did not object so much to the match as to the style of wooing; Sir Henry having, in course of courtship, burnt down the old castle, and all the churches, farm-houses and cottages on the south side of the Glenburnie estates, whenever he found that Lady Mary had slipped through his fingers and escaped. This did not tend to allay the feud, which became more and more bitter for many a dreary day.

But by-and-by there came a Bull of cooler blood, my own grandfather, Sir John, to hold the family lands and fortunes. Looking back over the whole history of this expensive and disastrous contest, and laying to heart the mistakes his ancestors had made, he formally proposed an honourable union of marriage with the heiress of his day, Miss Caledonia Scott. Much of the old family hostility still

smouldered red, but at last wisdom and good feeling prevailed, and, after much difficult and tedious negotiation, this "Treaty of Union," as it was called, was solemnly agreed to, and the marriage was accomplished, which brought "peace with honour" to both sides for the first time for many generations. This marriage was one of those rare and happy unions, in which both parties understand and respect each other more, and love each other better, as the peaceful years roll on. It was a marriage almost without a history. Some occasional tiffs arose, of course, but they were short and far between. Sir John was a happy man, and knew it. His wife brought him a large family of bonny daughters and tall, broad-shouldered sons, who did Sir John's work, and upheld Sir John's honour in the face of all men, and all the world over. But it was a common remark among the neighbours, that while they thoroughly respected Sir John, they all loved their mother Caledonia more tenderly and well.

In coming at once to the burning question of my own life, I pass without a word the fortunes of my father, Sir George, who introduced into the family some princely German blood, and left amongst us a lady whom we all revere. When I came to my present position as head of the house, I looked back and learned wisdom from these happy results of my grandfather's well-assorted Union with the heiress of the North. My own youthful feelings turned to my pretty and interesting ward (who had been my father's ward as well), the lively and witty Miss Erin Gobraugh, heiress of the Fitzpatricks of Paddyland. The lady was (and still is, by Jove!) most fascinating and

attractive, and I shall not attempt to deny that the lands were somewhat attractive too. The clear revenue of the estate was really scanty, for everything was out of order, and required a large and continuous outlay; the tenants were difficult to deal with, the expenses were very great, and the thanks were very small. I knew all this perfectly, of course, as the young lady's guardian, and as a mere money speculation nothing could well be worse. My motives were mixed, of course, but could not be sordid; for the whole gross income from Paddyland was a very trifling fraction of my own, and that income was almost, if not entirely, swallowed up in keeping that poor estate in tolerable order.

But, as I am making a clean breast of it, I do confess that over and above my darling Erin's personal charms and piquante, pretty ways, there were other considerations not unfelt. Perhaps you may know that her property and mine are intricately dovetailed into each other, and are separated only by certain narrow channels of water which run into the very heart of both estates. Obviously, if an enemy once got possession of Miss Erin and Paddyland, there could be nothing but bad blood, ill words and deeds, and eternal strife between us all our days, which such a strife would be sure to cut short. I really loved the girl (I do so yet), and the idea of her being another's, and of lifelong strife between us, was utterly horrible to me. I had done the duties of my guardianship, not skilfully, I dare say, but to the best of my business ability, and really as well as any other man. I could not bear to contemplate her in the possession of another who should contemptuously

undo all my plans for our mutual good, and the improvement of the estate. Both land and lady lay together very near my heart. The girl must and would be married soon, and I, and no one else—no confounded Don or Monsieur—must be the man to marry her. As to the ticklish tenantry, I felt I could manage them better, as husband of pretty Erin and proprietor of Paddyland, than I ever could as her mere guardian and friend.

Naturally enough, there were several suitors for Miss Erin's hand and fortune, and especially two great territorial magnates, Mons. Francais and Don Whiskerandos. Now, really, whatever Erin may say, they did not care for her, or desire her for her own sake, but solely to annoy me by thwarting my affections, and by attacking me in the rear from Paddyland and ruining myself and my tenantry by continual contentions. I knew that if she accepted either of those fellows, who wooed her, not because they cared for her, but because they hated me, there could be nothing but untold misery for us both. So, I stood on my guardianship, and prevented all access to my ward. At every attempt to reach her I sallied forth with a sturdy, active cudgel, and reasoning forcibly with it, after some exertion sent them off, one after another, disfigured and disenchanted. Even when in their rage, the whole of them came on at once, they were sent, sore and empty, away. Accordingly, there were no more personal visits, or proposals more or less honourable, though every now and then there came from a safe distance clandestine vows of undying love. Bless you, I know they never had a chance, though Miss Go-Bràgh pretended to fancy they had. Don't

all the women wish to make believe that they have had an extensive choice of eligible young men! Well, even my Erin was no exception to the taking little arts of her sex. She was, and still is, woman all over.

But there was and always would be a danger, so long as she remained single, and so I got over all preliminary obstacles and made my proposals in due form. There was some coy reluctance on her own part to give up her liberty, and a great display of sharp practice and double dealing on the part of her agents, and her tenants, and cousins, and uncles and aunts. I did not let trifles stand in my way, and simply put something into every Paddy hand that was held out to me—and there were hundreds of them, if not thousands. Well, after sacking an unconscionable amount of blackmail among them, to withdraw their sham opposition, and finding there was no more to be had, and that I was getting tired and disgusted, at last they consented; the settlements were signed, and amid loud rejoicings and congratulations, Miss Erin Go-Bràgh Fitzpatrick of Paddyland became my honoured wife—Lady Bull. All the settlements and arrangements were copied from the “Treaty of Union” which formed so happy a marriage between Sir John, my fortunate grandfather, and that rare woman, Miss Caledonia Scott. I was as good a husband, if not better (and I am so still), and as determined to make my wife a happy woman. But I shall not anticipate what has befallen me in my later middle age, especially since my appointment of a traitor as my steward.

As might be expected, people said ill-natured things in

abundance ;—such as that I was looking mainly at the estate of Paddyland and the exclusion of all rivals from the too near neighbourhood of my own estate,—that I was imperious in temper, while she was hot and impulsive,—that I had a great fund of stupidity mixed up with my very common sense,—that I never could or would understand Miss Erin Go-Bràgh,—that I was Protestant and she was Catholic, and would let the priest get between us,—that Erin was frisky and incalculable, and would find the Bull *ménage* intolerably respectable and dull,—that she had a feminine incapacity for reason, and capacity for believing lies and mischievous nonsense,—that there was great natural incompatibility of temper and character between us,—and that they would not be surprised to witness, first coldness and distrust, then direful domestic broils, and then divorce. I proudly told them that their wish was father to their thought, and that we, Erin and I, were determined to do well and disappoint them all.

But, proverbially, it is the onlookers who see the game ; and I have found a sad and terrible reality in the prediction of the stealthy, intrusive priest, and the other suggesters of evil and fomenters of discord, as well as in poor dear Erin's readiness to listen to everybody but me.

Into our early married life I need not enter now. We had light and shade, and occasionally all sorts of weather at home. I was kept very busy defending ourselves and both estates from the desperate assaults of envious neighbours, and did so most effectually, though at a great expense—an expense not yet quite paid off. Erin went with me heart and soul ; and her straight-limbed, light-

hearted, heavy-handed lads were a most welcome reinforcement when we were too hard pressed. Often we were hard pressed indeed, but still we were happy through it all. Some tiffs we had, but we soon forgot them. Our family was large and ever-increasing, but hearty and healthy withal, though bed and board got rather tight for us.

Our real heart-breaking domestic troubles arose with the engagement of our new steward, William E. Gabblesome. For this position we have always secured the services of a first-class man, the estates being so very extensive, so widely scattered, and so multiform, and the family and home business so large and lucrative in good times, and so liable to loss when times are bad, as they always are now-a-days. To secure the services of such a man, the custom of the family has been to give him a seven years' tenure of office, unless the holder should become distasteful to the tenants. Whenever that occurs, they have merely to say that the steward has lost their confidence, and out he goes at once. This custom makes things sweet for the time, but obviously it has its dangers. All the tenants' voting powers are equal, though their interests and their fitness to judge of a steward's qualifications are as different as possible. Now, William has always shown a peculiar eagerness to secure the good-will and support of those who know the least, and have been the least successful in life. These he calls the capable men—meaning, I suppose, capable of taking in anything—men of capacity. He, too, is a man of great capacity—capable of anything. He addresses himself to these people with the most skilful earnestness, and the most seductive Christian tone; calls

them his brothers, his own flesh and blood, and leads each man to fancy that *he* is the object of William's peculiar sympathy and care. Very peculiar indeed !

His aims are as peculiar as his means. His fixed notion is that the steward is by right the proprietor, and that, if he condescend to offer me now and then some few observances of empty etiquette, he can so work the usages of the estates as to be my master and not my servant. This is at the foundation of every question between us.

I must, however, confess with shame, that he has studied my peculiarities with far more skill than I have studied his. He knows my weaknesses especially, like a book, and every one of them he can twist and turn to his own advantage. He knows my deplorable foible of generosity before justice, and my equally deplorable good nature and want of memory for offences and offenders. Through them he fools me to the top of my bent. He knows that if he can only manage to postpone explanation of awkward and compromising facts till my wrath have once cooled down, I never can get up the same indignant heat again. And then, postponing and postponing, and explaining, as he calls it, in words which are never what they seem, first one part, and then another and another, till I hardly know whereabouts he is, he completely mystifies me, and gets off scot-free. Subsequently, his explanations always want to be explained, and further explained, and expanded and expounded, and revised, and altered, and improved, and reformed, and sophisticated, till everything is mixed up and confounded with everything else, and anything whatever may be affirmed of everything and denied of every-

thing, or both at once, with equal plausibility. If by some rare chance he deviates into a direct and definite statement, off he goes to Hansard (the copying book) and doctors it into the requisite duplicity—or triplicity.

As I am now making a clean breast of the causes that have brought me and my innocent family to this horrible position, I shall now candidly confess to you the secret of William's wonderful ascendancy over me. It is this. He has skilfully elaborated a most potent and glorious liquor, solely for his own gratification and mine, styled by himself and his friends "Mighty Magniloquence," but known to the world by its brand of "Verbosity"—"Gabblesome's own exuberant sparkling verbosity." It is quite impossible for those unfortunate people who have never tasted it, even to conceive the delicious intoxication produced by this most seductive drink. I am well assured that there can be no danger in this dear indulgence, for William himself often, at his chambers and elsewhere, honestly shares its joys along with me, revelling in the glorious sensations it imparts, and as gloriously inebriated as myself with the exuberance of his own verbosity. How divine are these sensations! When I quaff with him the crowning goblets of verbosity I feel myself quite a new man—rich, wise, and unspeakably noble and liberal! I feel that I have ascended into a world where everybody is to be implicitly trusted in every way with everything, every woman with every secret, and every man with all the property I have; a world where those misunderstood unfortunates whom no one else will trust—American-Irish, Russians, Boers, Bulgarians, and other blackguards—are to become, by my

kindly trusting them, so supernaturally honest, that they will nobly decline to do what they most desire to do, and have threatened to do, and vowed to do, and what I am to give them all liberty and facility to do, simply because that would pain and disappoint my heart and lower my esteem for them and faith in them; a world, in short, where everybody, even the lowest, only wants to be put upon his *Honour*, and all will be well! Administered by William's own liberal hand, this elixir of life fills my great heart with the soothing, swelling thought, that while even these friends of his have something noble in them, *I* am of all men the best, the noblest, the liberalest, the generousest, while darling William, that grand old gentleman, is wiser and nobler still than I. He it is that has educated, liberalised, glorified, exalted me, till my brain grows dizzy with my moral elevation, and my heart feels big to bursting with my moral grandeur! It is a very Heaven of Rapturous Delight!

Just at this stage, he invariably presents some little Bill for my acceptance, and being in no critical mood, I gloriously grant it, whatever the amount—were it hundreds of millions—trusting myself entirely to the lofty principles of my Honourable Friend. When presented for payment, William indignantly declares that any curiosity regarding the consideration for which it had been granted is injurious and insulting to him, and unworthy of me, and, indeed, that the whole matter of the Bill now to be paid is “Ancient History”! If I still feel dissatisfied, another and another glorious bumper of William's own sparkling verbosity makes me as happy as a King, and entirely oblivious

of all sordid circumstances which vainly try to intrude themselves upon my notice. What a grand old gentleman he is, and how nobly he trusts me! Even my very enemies are delighted when he is at my side, and compliment me on possessing such a treasure of a steward.

All would be well, if it never were to-morrow morning! But when it dawns——

It is most unfortunate for William, and still more for me, that, whenever he comes into office, all my accounts get suddenly larger, and the services for them smaller and less reliable; while every one of my neighbours now makes the most unscrupulous claims against me, with threats of assault or legal proceedings, or demands for one-sided arbitrations as a form of surrender. Whenever I venture to express to William my regret that I cannot submit to this or that absurd demand for the surrender of my rights, his invariable objection is, that if I am to insist on rights, there will be a controversy or a contest at law, and that my opponent in pursuit of his interests may even proceed to assault me in public, and that my dignity as well as my person will be damaged. He then, posing as a Christian, and taking all the credit of the act to himself, nobly offers them to give up my rights, to save my skin, as an example to the world of Christian humility. His notion of Christianity is—*Funk*—in his opinion the grandest attribute of man! But curiously, I never heard of *him* giving up any of his present rights, however doubtful these might be. Personally, and as a party man, indeed, his chief characteristic is his greed in grasping at the rights of others. But the kind and amount of Christian humilia-

tion and self-sacrifice he compels *me* voluntarily to exhibit, at my own expense and for his glory, is simply appalling. Still more appalling is the air of superhuman virtue with which this peculiar Christianity at my expense is paraded before a wondering world.

In this way, I am compelled by William, as my keeper, to submit to every demand of every Boer and bully I may meet, and such people now take care to encounter me everywhere. They count on William's worship of Funk as the ruling fact of the situation. The Boer or bully has only to say that, although I have to keep all my contracts with him, he declines to keep any of his with me, and the whole matter is at once decided against me by my smiling, smiling steward, whose "Christian Generosity" makes generosity and Christianity stink in my nostrils. His notion is that an agreement is binding on me, as a man of honour, and at the same time not binding on the other fellow as a man of the world. Accordingly, I am to keep the agreement, while the Boer or bully keeps the advantages, tears up the treaty, and throws the fragments in my face. This is the uniform outcome of everything William has done in my behalf. It is awfully tiresome to me; but seems quite jolly for him; for he immediately proceeds gravely to make new conventions and agreements in my name with the very same scoundrels, in which he carefully records as settled all he has compelled me to submit to, and with equal care commits me to untold and unbounded exactions and humiliations for the future.

Not knowing how I have had myself bound hand and foot, and never having felt, themselves, the dear, delightful

exuberance of Gabblesome's verbosity, all my neighbours think me crazy, or in my dotage; and who can wonder? I have been mad again and again, intoxicated with the deleterious gas of a windy oratory. Of course, my worthy neighbours have been acting on the sincere and glad conviction that my mind and body are both decayed, that I am breaking up, and very soon will be defunct, leaving my family and my affairs in a sorry plight. This has tested them thoroughly, and, sad to say, scarcely one has stood that test. The very "friends" who gave me the *pas* on all occasions when old Ben Beacon was my faithful friend and counsellor, now surround me in a watchful ring, ready to grab at all I have whenever I succumb, and only restrained by jealousy of each other regarding their respective shares of the plunder.

But by far the most impudent thing that has been said or done by any of them is Ivan Rusko, the Great Bear's rude remark, that he will be at peace with me, only so long as his honourable friend William Gabblesome is retained as my steward! Only think of the coolness of the burglar who dictates to you that you shall keep only such servants as shall suit his purposes! He will be righteously angry, forsooth, if I shall have as steward one who will be faithful to me rather than one who will be faithful to him! What next?—and next?

And then he sends him women—charming, clever women,—O. K., &c., you understand. What else he sends him I am the last to know; but what he sends to his underlings I do know,—rewards and honours, forsooth!—honours,

from such as he to such as they! If W. were stronger anywhere but in the tongue he would remind me of Samson and Dalilah, only that it is my secrets, and not his own, that he betrays in return for all her blandishments. They even do their endearments in public. Faugh! The Hebrew fool, poor fellow, was honestest, modestest, wiser; though he, too, was overmuch addicted to flourishing the jawbone of an ass.

Formerly, how very different was my happy, honoured life. When my old friend and faithful servant Ben Beacon was my steward and legal adviser, every one with whom I came into contact was most pleasant and respectful. Indeed only one ever ventured to take action against my rights and interests, a big hulking giant of a fellow—an intimate friend of Mr. Gabblesome's—commonly called the Great Bear. But Ben Beacon showed him such a plucky front, (notwithstanding William Gabblesome's delirious outcry to yield him everything he asked,) that the Great Bear sullenly withdrew his claims and his reluctant claws from the prize already in his grasp. Ever after I enjoyed peace with honour. How long ago that seems! How the whole world has been altered to me since I lived that happy, safe, and honoured life, and yet that honoured life was mine only six short years since.

It came to an end by the active alliance of my own steward Gabblesome with my avowed enemy working in concert on the weakest, lowest, and most dishonest and ignorant of the tenants, the one in Broadlands and the other in Paddyland. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

You have all asked indignantly, how could we commit

such a folly? To tell the very truth, the honest man had no verbosity; he did not know the secret of its concoction, and I dare say deemed it deleterious to me. Not even once did he assure me that all men were to be trusted, or exclaim what a good and noble creature I was! Not once did he flatter the Commons on the sublimity of their virtues and their faith in him. However, he did all our business honourably, successfully, and most economically. Whenever I woke up to any danger, I found that Honest Ben had long ago foreseen it, and provided for it—to the surprise and disgust of all ill-minded people. But he did not love my enemies, nor did they love him, and so, as Wily Gabblesome was wont to say, “He could not have been a Christian!” Now, no one can ever say as much of Wily, who came out as a Grand Old Gentleman, and fuddled us all in a way that makes one look back with wonder. Some time before, he had got my consent to a law that no treating was permissible, always excepting with verbosity, of which delightful drink he has a strict monopoly. Wasn’t that clever, now?

And so, for these astonishing reasons, we dismissed old Ben, who went down at once into his little country place, and with a simple primrose in his button-hole, sauntered along the rural lanes. Very soon he died and was buried. I went to his funeral, and laid his faithful old head in the grave, but Wily Gabblesome carefully lost the train, and could not come. This must be true, for he told me so.

From that dark day till this, neither Gabblesome nor I have thriven one hour, but misfortunes upon misfortunes have assailed us, not singly, but in battalions. They are

overwhelming now—but overwhelming me—not him. He is on the other side!

As I have often said, the Paddyland estates are the most ticklish ones in the world to manage. Still, I have contrived to manage them somehow, and though there have been many difficulties, yet on looking back over my administration, I can see, and even prove, a great general advancement. But as soon as Steward Gabblesome found himself safe, with a seven years' tenure of power in his pocket, and every office crammed with his friends, all looking to him as master, and not to me, he informed me that he was to manage the estate on Paddyland principles, by which he meant the wildest notions of the most ignorant and savage Paddies he could get hold of!

To give you one example. During my guardianship I had erected a church on the estate for myself and my friends, and as many of the tenants and retainers and labourers as liked to attend. Not very many did so, and the reason was a striking one. Whenever anyone was seen going to church with me, the "Irish idea" was to waylay him going home, and beat him within an inch of his life—sometimes, indeed, a good many inches beyond that. A good number of substantial farmers had gone over to aid me in introducing industry and high farming among farmers who could not farm. Many of these were from the Bull estates, but still more from the Scott estates in the North, and it was a hard thing if these good men, with their good wives and children, could not dare to go to church or chapel as they liked. But as there was continual strife and maiming, and even murder on this account, and

as it was hurtful to the feelings of the Paddylanders to see the respectable people having a church of their own to go to, Steward Gabblesome, in his wisdom, deemed it best that I should withdraw all countenance and support from these few offensively respectable people and their church, and therefore he did so in my name. In many distant parts of the estate now they have either to join with those Catholic workers of "Irish ideas," or abstain from going to any place of worship. This William declares to be a glorious result, brandishing his arms about, and muttering some rubbish about the felling of upas trees. Whatever can the man mean?

But the chief peculiarity of Paddyland is that the tenants hold it to be a mortal sin and shame to pay the rent, and a mortal offence to ask for it. To pay is to confess yourself inferior, when the main principle of morals and politics is, that "one man is as good as another—aye, and a great deal better." Base is the slave who pays! Their notion is that when a gentleman buys a piece of land for hard cash, gained no doubt by someone's hard labour, such property is Theft, and the rent for it is Robbery; in fact that the land does not belong at all, at all, to the man who pays for it, but to the man who doesn't. All the latter requires to do is to get hold of the land by offering a rent for it, and then repudiate that rent as too much, and when it is reduced, repudiate *all* rent as immoral and dishonest, and dare any devoted process-server to disturb him in the enjoyment of his "just rights"! And so, by a sort of sacred hocus-pocus, sanctioned by the Holy Church, Robbery becomes Property, and Property becomes Robbery,

so that any man has a right to it, except the man who pays for it! These are the Paddyland principles, the Irish ideas, adopted and enforced at my expense by my own steward, William Gabblesome, as the ideal of justice, and the chief end of man—at least in Lady Bull's estate of Paddyland, which it is his duty to manage and preserve. If he were to conserve our rights to our own, he fears he might be called a Conservative, which is a vulgar, stupid principle; while by freely forgiving everyone who owes *me* anything, he earns the noble name of Liberal. I must have read somewhere of an Unjust Steward who acted in the very same way, making himself friends by means of Mammon or unrighteous money, but I never took it up as an example to be strictly followed. Evidently Earnest Gabblesome does.

His reasoning is original. Now, originality in morals is always doubtful, if not dangerous. The moral law he holds to be divine;—indeed he is always quoting it as such. The will of the people, or of any vulgar fraction of the people, is also, as he holds, divine. “Vox Populi, vox Dei.” But when the will of the people, or some of the people, cannot be brought up to the moral law, then the moral law must be brought down to the will of these people, so that these two divine rules may coincide, as they always ought. The grand new Gabblesome maxim is to change that will which can be changed most easily. The Paddylanders have found out that this is his guiding principle, and resolved that it shan't be *their* will that is to go to the wall. Let Steward Gabblesome take the moral law into his own hands, they say, or we shan't vote for him. So accordingly he does, and

annuls it in Paddyland, though still generously willing to allow it to rule in Saturn and Jupiter. But as he does not know whether these are inhabited at all, this concession to Divinity does not amount to much.

When a man with money and ideas of benevolence, combined with business, goes to Paddyland to invest his gold, he finds very soon that what he gets for it is not land but lead, while someone else gets the land, who was not such a fool as to pay for it. If he object to that return for his money, let him leave his dirty guineas and his dirty acres to better men, and let him run for his life, and then lose all claim for mercy or consideration as an accursed absentee. Other loans and debts are still recognised, if not even sometimes repaid, but it is a sacred duty to refuse the rent of land, and a crime of the deepest dye to pay it. Such a crime soon gets what it deserves. If you ever see the hedges and ditches of Paddyland lined with a noble peasantry with loaded guns, they are not waiting there for such small game as hares or rabbits, but for some low dog who has forfeited his wretched life for the crime of paying the rent he has promised for the land he has cropped. Such a villain is boycotted in life, and Wheelered in death, and all the priests and people say Amen, and rush to the holy sacrament as a token of the divine satisfaction at their performance of their sacred duties. As the Bishops have just assured the Pope, the Paddyland saints are never so earnest in religious rites as when they are busiest in these exercises of practical virtue! These two things naturally go together as cause and effect. And, sure, our hottest sympathies are due to those devoted men who take the

trouble to shoot down the villains that pay ! These are the "Irish ideas" chosen by William Gabblesome to light him on to Glory. What a heated atmosphere their Heaven must have !

The chief director of this grand movement is Charnell, who endeavours to remain a gentleman by diligently doing all his dirty work by deputy. His style is circuitous but effective. First he goes about amongst those virtuous farmers, and promises to abolish their rents, if they will in return stand by him in his virtuous efforts to procure a divorce against me, and possession of my wife for himself. William now says, there is nothing morally wrong in such a bargain. But many of the best men have had the virtue to resist that temptation, though obliged to conceal their virtues, as carefully as others have to conceal their vices and their crimes. Such virtue is most offensive to Charnell, who gives the signal to his bravoës—his Shoridans, Aigans, Careys, and Bradys, to blow these people up, to harass them by midnight alarms and murders, to burn their houses over them, to maim their children, to disembowel their cattle, and in every way to effect what he euphemistically terms their "removal." In one word, he and his crew have made a Charnell-House,—a Hell of dear old Paddyland—which used to be such a joyous, rollicking place. All this time Charnell came into my own presence, looking as calm and as innocent as a lady. Whenever William entered my service to safeguard my dearest interests, but having all the while a secret understanding with my enemy, he professed to believe all these facts to be wicked stories got up against a man of honour ;

and Charnell taking his measure, went farther and farther every night. He knew William's price, and that it was only necessary to promise it—not to pay it.

But some people say, surely there must be some good reason at the bottom of these fierce demands for liberty and divorce. Let us see. When you analyse those that are offered you, after blowing off the froth, you invariably find that Charnell and his friends object to the Ten Commandments, as a rule, for *them*. These never originated in Paddyland, and are therefore unsuited to the genius of its people; and so they have to them a foreign aspect. Besides they are mighty "inconvenient," and senselessly forbid all sorts of nice things. And then they say that I, as a pig-headed Saxon, show a most bigoted dislike to the liberties the "boys" like best, and stupidly identify myself with an obsolete Decalogue.

The second reason is still more strange. Because many generations ago some of my great grandfathers quarrelled with some of hers—many faults existing and multiplying and mixing on both sides—*therefore* I must suffer divorce, who have done no wrong. Although many of these quarrels had ended before my birth, and although I have reversed all that reached my day, and yielded far more than justice to people much weaker than myself, who kept telling me all the time how deeply and how desperately they hated me; and though I have still calmly persevered in my work of well-doing, and never permitted my thoroughly deserved anger to break forth, though every kindly and too trustful act has been received as a proof of weakness, with curses instead of thanks, yet for

these *strongly but vaguely* alleged faults of my distant grandfathers against her distant grandfathers, nothing will suffice but this disgraceful condemnable divorce and abandonment of my family to the cruelties and insults of their bitterest and most malignant enemies. In Charnell this is only wicked, and nothing more is expected of *him*.

But Gabblesome now simply repeats all that Charnell affirms, and all that he himself has denied. The monster I have to fight has a Gabblesome mouth and a Charnell mind, with Brady's and Sheridan's murderous hands.

But when Gabblesome, my own sworn steward and confidential adviser, loudly re-echoes the demands of one whom he has often proved to me to be a villain, and when he gravely argues that this compulsory divorce is a just retribution for the so-called misdeeds of former generations, even though I have far more than rectified and reversed them, I cannot help asking myself, "Is not that insanity?" But let me be reasonable. He is only inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and have not I too been many a time and oft as far gone as he with the same seductive sparkling intoxicant? At the present moment, I am sober, only too sober, indeed; but my affairs have been brought to such a fix, that I fear I must again get up the radiant glow which nothing but verbosity seems now to yield me.

As to those so-called oppressions of long ago, I don't believe very much of them. At least, those who rant the loudest regarding them, are those who make the falsest charges against myself. From the known I may judge the unknown. They always begin their stories in the

middle. If they have to tell the story of a massacre of honest men, and innocent women and children, they begin it just at the point when those who did it have been condemned to be hanged, and by this simple expedient, *these* appear to be not murderers but martyrs.

If this mode of visiting the apocryphal sins of the forefathers upon the latest generations who have ever reversed every wrong, is to be a sacred principle, how is Mr. Gabblesome himself to escape from the guilt and punishment of the slaveholding practices of his own father, when Gabblesome himself is living *even now* on the proceeds of the toil and sale of these poor slaves. Am I to be bound to put into painful practice his loftiest notions of sublime self-denial, while he gets off with the bare profession of them, but claims all the credit for my toils and pains?

And how, pray, should my marriage with Erin have made the Paddyland tenantry the poorest and the worst in the world, when my own grandfather's marriage with Miss Caledonia Scott, precisely similar, and under similar covenants in all respects, has made the tenantry of that estate, the richest, the busiest and the best in the world? When sober, I can't believe a word of it. If the Paddylanders are poor, lazy, grumbling and good-for-nothing, it is not my fault, but their own. To prove that the fault lies not in their circumstances, but in themselves, a colony of Scotts were sent over to the north end of Paddyland, and have thriven there quite as well as in their native soil, and have remained, as is their nature, staunch and faithful to me, even when, inebriated with verbosity, I have deserted and betrayed them.

After many efforts to win back Paddyland to sanity and civilization, one of my noblest sons, William E. Forster Bull, of Bradford, volunteered to go to the post of danger,—the office of Chief Secretary of Paddyland,—and uphold my rights and interests there. William was emphatically a noble, just, and honourable man. He was a man of merciful mind, and long before, in the bad years, visited the poorest labourers and tenants in Paddyland, inquired into their necessities, and relieved them from his own big pocket. How different from Gabblesome's style! Wily always relieves those who can pay him back—at least with votes, but never out of his own pocket, always out of mine, or by way of fine, or rate, or tax, or confiscation, levied on any of my friends who dare distrust him. Faith in *Him* is salvation, want of it condemnation and ruin. This is his simple Christian creed.

On this occasion Gabblesome eagerly assented to my dear Forster's proposal, as it put him out of the way for the present, and his friend Charnell might be confidently expected to put him still farther out of his way for the future. It was not Charnell's fault that he did not, for his friends and allies diligently made at least twenty known well-planned attempts on honest William's life. Every day he was in danger of a cruel death from the knives of Charnell's cowards (Invincibles they called themselves), to be sanctimoniously disavowed by Charnell, and still more sanctimoniously lamented by Wily Will, who no doubt had a most beautiful and affecting speech all ready composed in anticipation of that "unfortunate death,"—that "regrettable occurrence."

Meanwhile, Wily Will was found skulking round Charnell's jail by deputy (O'Shay), and concocting with him a scheme for their mutual aid and advantage. Uniting their projects, their powers and plans, they were to be most liberal to each other at my expense, dividing my family and estates between them. Charnell was to have, after a little delay, Erin (Lady Bull), and the whole of Paddyland for his share; my foreign and colonial estates were to go to anyone who would take them as a generous gift from Gabblesome; while the original family estates of Broadlands and Glenburnie were to be eventually converted into a limited liability company, with Wily himself as sole manager and chief shareholder. Honest William, however, got possession of the terms, and at once resigned his connection with the traitors, telling them he should open my eyes to that underhand villany. After innumerable doublings and windings, Wily Gabblesome and Charnell were brought to book, and read, in my presence, garbled copies of their agreement, with the treacherous stipulations for future concert carefully cut out. But honest William had taken a correct copy, which he then and there produced. Tableau.

Even then, however, Wily was not silenced, but claimed that he had said written terms were not necessary between men of honour. Still each one fulfilled his part of the bargain, but their mutual aid was made to appear the spontaneous outcome of their mutual admiration, and to arise from a lofty and enlightened regard for my reputation in the world, and for my best interests and domestic happiness! When the verbosity had been flowing free,

and these grand words had been uttered in Gabblesome's finest earnest and impassioned style, they actually seemed to be possibly true! But when sobriety and coolness came——

Thank Heaven, dear honest William, at least at the moment, miraculously escaped those many murdering hearts, and hands, and knives, but only to die *now* in my utmost need, worn to death by the terrible strain of those treacherous and cruel years.

Next, at Wily's suggestion, I sent over another of my noblest sons, Frederick Cavendish Bull (why did he not propose his own darling Herbert, I wonder?) to act as Chief Secretary with the estate's agent, big Tom Bourke, in bringing back the Paddylanders to some slight recognition of the moral law, and some moderate regard for the Ten Commandments, which they have never taken to very kindly, offering them the most generous inducements, and even bribes, to induce them to condescend so far. Wily's plans, however, were far in advance of mine, and involved a complete surrender, step by step, to Charnell's whole demands. But Charnell had not had time to countermand his general orders, and so that very day Charnell's Invincibles surrounded my beloved son Frederick and my faithful old servant Tom Bourke, and setting upon them with surgeons' knives, stabbed them to death. Even Wily could not palliate or deny this fact, and being thus compelled to confess the reality of many similar acts which he had hitherto made light of, he was constrained to proclaim the Moral Law as still in force in Paddyland. He took care to stipulate, however, that it should be enforced for not more than three years, so that Charnell's "agreement,"

or "arrangement," or "sacred covenant," might yet in due course come into play. He took due credit, too, with the other side, for the extreme regret with which he found himself reluctantly forced to coerce Paddylanders with a law so foreign to their feelings and so much opposed to their habits. In this way, he claimed credit from both sides, and, with the expenditure of some first-rate verbosity, obtained it.

When, very strangely, last summer Steward William broke with his colleagues and assistants, and could not even profess to do my business, either with them or without them, I called in to office Robert Cecil, who had been in those happy, hopeful, prosperous days Ben Beacon's right-hand man; and though the weltering mess into which he went for my sake was horrible and awful, in a few short weeks all was going well, and ere six months were gone, I was again the most honoured and respected man in the country. Not one word of legal proceedings now! Not one threat of assault! Not a single demand for a one-sided arbitration! And yet Robert never had to say an angry word. Only once or twice he looked significantly, and showed his mighty fist. Nothing more was needed.

In the hottest haste, William came back indignant, and determined to put a stop to all that; but when he found I liked it, he demonstrated with all his might that Robert had merely had the devil's own luck, which, of course, a Christian steward like him could not expect to have.

But as this was met with smiles of incredulity, he gave all of us a really startling surprise. This was a formal public denunciation of Robert Cecil, as a villain who had

made a treacherous secret agreement with that other villain Charnell to procure, by hook or by crook, my immediate divorce from my dear old wife, Erin, to be placed under his protection, while Charnell was to do as much for him in return. The charge seemed monstrous and incredible. But with tears in his eyes turned up imploringly to Heaven, by all that is sacred he besought me, and all those who had my domestic happiness at heart, to break up that base alliance, to frustrate their knavish tricks, and to that great end to make him Grand Steward once again. The best verbosity was set flowing like a fountain, and all of us, thrown into a heat of virtuous indignation, triumphantly elevated William again in power, seeing that that alone, as he averred, could suffice to save me from that direst domestic misery and degradation.

Now it is incredible, and yet it is true, that not only was this story against Robert Cecil, commonly called Salisbury, a big, brazen, slanderous lie, but William himself had for some time past determined to do that very deed of villany himself, and at the first convenience his hopeful Herbert, his father's own son, intimated an "agreement," or "arrangement," or "sacred covenant," with Charnell for that precise purpose. Not even in William's career have I known anything quite so base as this, although most things in that career have had the same bad complexion.

Now, if a general intrigued in this way to get the command of a great expedition, on the distinct and repeated charge (afterwards proved false), that his rival general in command had bargained to surrender that

expedition to the enemy, and if when it had been therefore taken from that rival and confided to *his* honour, expressly to prevent any such surrender, he at once opened secret negotiations with the enemy for making a total surrender, with the proviso, that it should not in its form be total, but that the enemy should be at once put into possession of such positions that it could be made total at their sole discretion; if a general of any army should do such a deed of shame, what should be done with him? Shot, I should say, but certainly cashiered and disgraced for ever. Now, why should the honour of my chief steward be so immeasurably below the ordinary military level?

Even if an ordinary attorney should intrigue in a similar way to obtain the management of a most important case, and then at once, for considerations, sell that case to the opposite party, what should be done with him? Would that man's name remain on the attorneys' Rolls? Then, why should the Right Honourable Gabblesome, my chief adviser, director of my business, and keeper of my conscience, stand so far—so very far—below the level of the honour of an ordinary attorney? I should have so dearly liked to think old Gabblesome an able, honest, and successful steward. We have been glorious for weeks together. But, if *he* is able, honest, faithful, and true to me, every other servant of the House for many generations must have been stupid, dishonest, unfaithful, and false! Again, if *he* is all he says, not one of my neighbours ever had an honest man in his service. Again, if he is honourable, safe, judicious, and faithful now, he must have been the very opposite all his life *till now*. From the avowal

that *all* his former views have been erroneous, he continually draws the astounding conclusion of his own absolute infallibility now. But when a weathercock gets mad, of course he accuses everybody of rushing round the whole horizon! Such is William Earnest Gabblesome.

To understand Gabblesome's pleadings against me, I must recall the strange facts that whoever is an enemy of mine is always a dear friend and ardent admirer of his; and whoever is a friend of mine is marked out for the worst turn that my steward can do to him. To be even suspected of good feeling to me, and much more of friendship, is to be subjected to every wrong and indignity,—to be disestablished and disendowed, to be boycotted, shot at, blown up with dynamite, cut to pieces by cowards called Invincibles, and then, if possible, left unburied like a masterless dog by the wayside. Can I ever be reduced to be villain enough to pardon that? How can I tell till our next deep bouse of verbosity, when Wily asks me to show a Christian and forgiving spirit? Some unfortunates who had known me in happier times when I was really a Man, and my own Master, have trusted in Gabblesome and me; and these unhappy people have been invariably betrayed to their ruin, and often to their death, by my servant in my name,—a name once so honourable and so honoured. Day upon day, month by month, year after year, comes the unending roll of ruin and disaster to those so unhappy as to trust in my name now. Poor souls, how little did they know how changed I am. May God do so to me; and more also, if ever I forgive it! And yet,—

At every stage of every such transaction, every boorish

scoundrel besmears our Old Hand with the most fulsome praises for his generosity—especially in contrast with me—that generosity being always exhibited in nobly giving away whatever I like the best to the men I despise the most. Indeed, there is no conceivable virtue with which he is not credited in the highest degree,—and all at my expense. Chief of these abominable virtues is his “moral courage,” “moral heroism,” and what not! When he blanches before a Boer, and runs away at the first blow, that is “moral courage,”—the courage to run away! When he leaves in the lurch the poor people whom he had induced to side with him from their trust in me, when the men are massacred, and their families enslaved, and when Gabblesome sweetly smiles on those who do it, that is “Christian Forgiveness,” the free forgiving, by him, of whatever is done to me!

It is not only the poor and the weak who are done to death for their trust in me, but my best and noblest sons as well. The very son of whom I was proudest and fondest, my darling hero—Charles Gordon Bull—was sent away by Gabblesome to a post of utmost danger, to save my honour which Gabblesome had compromised. In a moment he was off, followed by our dearest love and our highest hopes. Little did we know that he was simply sacrificed, to stave off for a few weeks the detection of some of Gabblesome’s tortuous follies. Whenever he had served that ignoble end, he was left to perish at his lonely post, calling in vain for the slightest aid to enable him to save my honour, and to rescue crowds of wretched people who had trusted in me,—and also in him. True, Gabble-

some sent him a tardy message when surrounded (No! hemmed in was the proper word), telling him, just to run away and leave them all to perish there! What a cowardly message to send to a Gordon, just as if he had been a Gabblesome! When at last, authentic word came that he and all he had so long protected were no longer able to stand up for want of food, were butchered in a mass, off went Gabblesome to the theatre, to relieve his overcharged gratification at this result, by uproarious laughter at a vulgar farce! At that dreadful sight, I sickened, and even yet I cannot trust myself to say a single word regarding it.

On the first anniversary of the very day when my heroic son, Charles Gordon, died deserted at his distant post, for my sake and for my honour, Wily Will starts his scheme for my divorce from Darling Erin, and the abandonment of our family to their bitterest foes. This is merely a multitude of Gordons treacherously destroyed *en masse*. In his exposition of that scheme, he leaves the children of the marriage entirely at the disposal of Charnell, Haley, Aigan, Shoridan, with all their Curleys, Careys, and Bradys, whom he considers men of honour, decency, justice, and mercy, and perfectly fitted for that parental duty. For all my friends scattered over Paddyland, and living there on the faith of my protection, the unpledged honour of Charnell and Co. is all the guarantee they are to get. From that crew my children can expect no mercy, unless indeed they consent to curse and kick their poor old father. Poor, poor, indeed, to hand over his spirited lads and sweet little girls to a fate like that! No honest man ever yielded so much till after a final defeat, but

Gabblesome says it will save blood-guiltiness if I yield them all up at once—mother and children. He even called it noble conduct, and produced his best verbosity. I can't see it yet myself, but I am perfectly sure that Gabblesome sees it quite sincerely. His verbosity was splendid.

I am not at all surprised at his choosing the anniversary of my Gordon's murder for initiating the Divorce Scheme, nor for his intimation that my consent was to be demanded on the anniversary of the murder of my son Frederick Cavendish, for the calendar is now so crowded with disaster that he really cannot easily steer clear of awkward memories. But, luckily, when there is nothing pleasant to remember, verbosity, at least, sponges out the record of the weary brain, and leaves it blank.

The reasons he adduces for this tremendous step are so irrational as to be incomprehensible to the sane mind, and acceptance of them would form an excellent test for the guidance of a Commissioner in Lunacy. His chief reason alleged for this divorce, is the ancestral feud which I brought *by this very marriage* to a most honourable end! Over this so-called reason he laboured long, but it was all a mingled compound of unreason. Next, he asserted that there was some difference between my marriage with Erin and my grandfather's nuptials with Miss Caledonia Scott. On the ladies' side there was, no doubt, and still more between their families and relations; but on our side, any difference between Grandfather John and me is decidedly in my favour as a husband. Even Erin heartily admits that. The marriage settlements were the most favourable to the lady that have ever been drawn.

His next absurdity was an argument that the husband is always to blame for his wife's incompatibility of temper, seeing that he, being the stronger, can always gracefully give way to the lady's whims. That I have done only too often; and no single husband can be named more indulgent to his spouse than I have been to Erin, and even to the unsavoury, quarrelsome crew who surround her. Paddyland hatred is unfounded and mad, no doubt; but we don't let madmen loose merely *because* they are mad;—unless, indeed, we are so too.

Another sufficient reason, in his opinion, was my having given most liberal tips to many of the needier and greedier Go-Bràghs to withdraw their fractious opposition, and hurroo at the wedding. It seems to me purely a lunatic idea, that at our time of life our marriage should be dissolved, and our family broken up, for a *petit faux pas* like that!

Still more lunatic seems his reason, that to Erin my wife, who has been under our family guardianship since her infancy, and who has been so long my much honoured and favoured wife, and the mother of many children,—to her I am still only a foreigner (only try in some sane way to fancy that), and that my insistence in the observance of at least some of the Ten Commandments is also foreign to the feelings of her friends. Now, I admit that I have had actually to coerce Charnell's friends and helpers into some regard for those Ten Commandments they find so foreign to their nature. No doubt I have not liked this task, and they have liked it less. Therefore, Gabblesome maintains it must be morally wrong to police people into

honesty. If I would only permit them to coerce themselves and their neighbours as much as they pleased to obey an unwritten law of their own, it would be a beautiful arrangement, and would be worked silently and smoothly. I have merely to give Charnell, Haley, Aigan, Shoridan, and the rest of the criminal class, power to dismiss the Judges at pleasure, and to appoint themselves, power to dismiss the police, and enrol a new force in its stead, to enforce the new law of liberty, and there will be no more resistance to the law. It will be the old-fashioned folks, with fossil notions of loyalty and morality, who will then resist, or at least attempt it. But such things need never reach my ears. Sufficient for to-day is the evil thereof.

His next absurdity is that the strip of water between us is too broad and the distance too great to enable me to manage Paddyland, even with the assistance, such as it is, of one hundred and three selected Paddylanders in Gabblesome's own chambers. That is curious. It is only two hours' distance the shortest way, while the other estates I manage, simple as I look, are not only many hundred times larger than Paddyland, but some of them many hundred times farther off. If I confess myself incapable of managing the smaller and the nearer, how long should I have the management of the larger and more distant? I should be very soon dispossessed of all, in punishment of my want of common sense, and common firmness. An impudent young fellow named Tynan ("No. 1") used to tell me I was becoming a wreck from fatty degeneration of the heart and flabbiness of muscle. That was bad enough for *him*, but when Gabblesome, whose own sparkling verbosity has so

shattered my nervous system and lowered my vitality, assigns this result as a reason for surrendering all my natural rights, and betraying my family and my friends, it is too much for even my egregious good nature. Only let me once get quit of this Dipsomania, and him who tempts me to the indulgence of it, and I shall be a Man again.

It was interesting, though rather puzzling, to hear from him that the union between my lady and myself "is not at all to be put in jeopardy," whatever that may mean, but only that its character is to be totally altered, and that I am to have no more communication with her, even to tell her what I would wish or what I can't stand, and that I must never go near her, while she and our children are to be entirely in the possession of Charnell, Haley, and other blackguards. This is what he calls leaving our union intact. What a Grand Old Hand he is! Wading carefully through the fog of his phraseology, I have at last hit on a meaning. He thinks that if it be not *called* a divorce, but only "a complete legal separation with absolute freedom, and the protection of Charnell and Co.," a new amity would spring up between the parties, when there would be no mutual benefits, but only painful negative restraints between us. He says he thinks that whenever I became a mere obstacle to Erin's inclinations, and the necessity of her position, and her creditor for an immeasurable sum of money, her joy at that obstacle, and her eagerness to pay me my full interest, would impel her almost if not altogether to love me once more, and cast Charnell, her "uncrowned King," behind her back. What a splendid

fancy William does possess, when inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity! With a confidential wink, he insinuates that if I would only yield her up to Charnell now, I may easily take her back by force whenever I find he boycotts or blows her up, or starves or mutilates her, or turns my sons and daughters out of doors! There's a pretty reason for you! Doesn't he see that I should then have no legal or moral rights whatever, and that I might not even succeed in that miserable attempt to undo this miserable deed? *This* is the moment for a manly resistance.

On the other hand, he warns me affectionately, that if I do not consent to this outrageous divorce for imaginary reasons, I shall still be compelled to yield at last, for after *he*, my own legal adviser and confidential friend, has decided that it must be, all the neighbourhood will suppose there must have been substantial reasons, and the incompatibility of temper of Erin and her "friends" will not only become more exasperated, but may even begin to affect my own kind equability—which would be a monstrous pity. Both he and his Assistant Secretary, Mawworm, selected to make alone an impartial search for reasons, on the ground of his having already prejudged the case, have succeeded in finding only one—viz., that if I do not knuckle down and submit with a good grace to this last indignity, Charnell their friend will infallibly burn my house over my head, and blow me and my family into the air; that the trains are already laid, and the Invincible Guy Fawkes told off for that duty—sacred duty, I think they called it! That is the sort of fellow I am to be compelled to give up

my Erin to, and that is the sort of reason thought good enough for a man like me!

But Wily Will goes on to assure me my submission would be a noble deed, and, with much verbosity, engages upon his honour!—HIS HONOUR! mark you—that the being entrusted with my Darling Erin and our children would greatly help to steady Charnell, who has hitherto kept the worst of company; and the generous surrender of my children would put the very Dynamiters upon their honour!—THEIR HONOUR! mark you—and make them carefully refrain from abusing their position, were it only to prove themselves far more noble in their self-restraint than I in my weak and miserable surrender. What a beautiful inducement to offer to a husband and father!

After another application to our source of inspiring faith, exalting to enthusiasm himself as well as me, “What a splendid example of self-sacrifice,” he cries, “that will offer to the eyes and minds of an admiring world! Every man, inspired by so glorious an example, will hasten to go and do likewise.” Recovering my senses for a few moments, I ask him what sort of a world that would be, when, with a vehement burst of whirling, dazzling, dizzying eloquence, the verbosity meanwhile going like mad, he gives me his fervent, ardent, prophetic assurance, that such a world would be the best of all possible worlds—would, indeed, be Heaven itself! An idea just glances into what I used to call my mind, that it would seem a great deal like “another place,” where another “grand old hand” with equal popularity presides.

It is not unusual for the projectors of expensive schemes

to postpone all questions of expense until the project is in principle accepted. But it is unusual to permit them to blink this part of it. However, that is just what Gabblesome has claimed, and I permitted. One would have thought it should be rather a cheap thing to let another fellow take away your wife. It should be cheap, for it is undoubtedly nasty. But Wily Will says, "No! For if, as I swear, Erin is truly dear to me, I must be willing to pay a good large sum to ensure her happy union with one who assures me he is the man of her choice!" So says Gabblesome.

Now, I cannot see this either, but Gabblesome tells me that that is no matter, since he does. When able and honest men, such as Mr. Heartintongue, his own first assistant, and others, think exactly with me, William haughtily informs them that they are mere ciphers,—of considerable use when ranged submissively and properly behind *him*, but of no value whatever apart from him, the only existing significant figure!

You know the times are hard with all of us, and getting ever harder. William says they are not, and points to the fact that the whole family are harder at work than ever, and the work, he holds, is of more importance than the pay. Still, the pay and the profit are surely of some importance, too; and these have all but disappeared. In these hard circumstances, William's scheme is, that I shall hand over all my cash in hand, and put my name to short bills as far as my credit can be made to go, so that Charnell and Erin may set up a stylish establishment, with many idle servants and dependants, and open house all the

year over, entirely at my expense. It amounts to a bankruptcy, but what of that, if they are only happy together?

When he found that I demurred to an expenditure so ruinous, for an object so objectionable, to soothe what he called my foolish scruples, he tells me that he shall not require all the money at once, but will take it in large instalments, if I only accept the principle (as he calls it), and the bills. Even Joseph C. Bull, a shrewd man of business, formerly eminent in the screw trade, and naturally assimilated to the articles he dealt in, but who has acted for some time as Gabblesome's clerk, with a view to the reversion of the stewardship, has revolted against this proposal, which practically means poverty at home for all time to come. Joe refuses to pledge the future—his future, too—merely to allow Gabblesome to disappear in a blaze of theatrical glory. Gabblesome promised to consult him all through, but consulted Charnell only, and merely threw down the agreement settled with him, before Joe, to take it or leave it. Joe came right off to me to warn me what was intended, but in the midst of his explanation in comes Gabblesome, steps between us, and forbids Joe to speak a word till he is permitted. The instinct of discipline prevailed, and Joe walked out of the house, while Gabblesome swore that no one should inform me until *he* had the whole matter made up and ready for completion.

But on looking myself over the financial arrangements cut out for me, I find it clearly set down that I am to pay out of my own pocket all the rents payable by Paddylanders in times past, present, and to come, and take my

poor little chance of ever being repaid, when Charnell has taught them that all rent is robbery, and all robbery of me is right. Again, I find it clearly set down in Gabblesome's own hand that, notwithstanding this divorce and cohabitation with Charnell, I must still, at my own expense, defend him and her against all assaults or legal claims and proceedings, and that they may quarrel with whoever they choose, whenever, wherever, however, and on whatever they choose, and simply send the bill of costs and damages to me for payment, while I am permitted neither to prevent nor advise them. Certainly, as Gabblesome assures me, this is not mere divorce. It comes to be a combination of all the evils and liabilities of matrimony, widowerhood, and divorce, without any of the advantages of any of these conditions.

For my part, I am thoroughly sobered now, though some of my friends still wallow in the welter of verbosity, from which I have at last arisen, still just safe, though on the very brink of destruction. At last I have seen my egregious folly, and determined, with Divine assistance, never to indulge in that fatal habit more. Well do I know that the alternatives so cruelly and treacherously forced on us are resistance and strife to regain the reasonable happiness of well-doing, or submission to unending misery—a hard but long and useful life, or a long and miserable decline and death. I cannot fathom all the consequences of my choice, for everything has been carefully mixed up with everything else. But all those kind neighbours who so heartily hate me, and only wait for my downfall, and the break up of the family and the family estates, stand

quivering in a silent ecstasy of hope, and scarcely able for the moment to repress their exultant yells. They only wait the expected fatal words, "Yes! dearest William, my only trusted friend, do with me just as you like!" On the other hand, I can see my true friends watching my every motion, white with horror and amazement, and with distrust of my weakened memory, and my lamentable loss of determined will. Let me disappoint, at once, the hopes of my enemies, and the fears of my friends.

Only do ye, my sons, stand steadfast by your grossly deceived old father, and let us, as in the glorious days of old, quit us like men of sense and courage, and reject with abhorrence the treacherous wiles and temptations of the Grand Old Enemy.

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